DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 178 487 SP 014 754

AUTHOR Patton, James M.; Braithwaite, Ronald L.
TITLE Public Law 94-142 and the Changing Status of Teacher Certification/Recertification: A Survey of State Education Agencies.
PUB DATE 79
NOTE 14p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Educational Policy; *Inservice Teacher Education; *Mainstreaming; *Special Education; State Departments of Education; *State Standards; *Teacher Certification; Teacher Education
IDENTIFIERS Education for all Handicapped Children Act

ABSTRACT

Fifty state departments of education and the District of Columbia were surveyed in an effort to ascertain the impact of Public Law 94-142 on certifying and recertifying regular classroom teachers. Of the 48 states responding, 33 states and the District of Columbia (71 percent) reported that regular classroom teachers are not required to complete courses in special education to meet initial certification requirements. Additionally, 44 states (92 percent) do not require special education coursework for recertification of regular classroom teachers. Of the ten states requiring either courses or experiences with special education populations for certification, only two indicated that these requirements resulted from Public Law 94-142. (Authors)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

James M. Patton

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ED178487

PUBLIC LAW 94-142 AND THE CHANGING STATUS OF TEACHER CERTIFICATION/RECERTIFICATION: A SURVEY OF STATE EDUCATION AGENCIES

SP014754

ABSTRACT

Fifty state departments of education and the District of Columbia were surveyed in an effort to ascertain the impact of Public Law 94-142 on certifying and recertifying regular classroom teachers. Of the 48 states responding, 33 states and the District of Columbia (71%) reported that regular classroom teachers are not required to complete courses in special education to meet initial certification requirements. Additionally, 44 states (92%) do not require special education coursework for recertification of regular classroom teachers. Of the ten states requiring either courses or experiences with special education populations for certification, only two indicated that these requirements resulted from Public Law 94-142.

The Education for All the Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (P.L. 94-142) provides federal legislative support to earlier philosophical and professional movements for "mainstreaming" and "normalization." A major intent of the law is that, to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped individuals be educated in environments which progressively approximate those offered their peers. This mandate, together with the requirement that individualized educational plans be developed for each handicapped child, seems to suggest changes in both teacher education and teacher certification and licensing of regular classroom teachers.

The mainstreaming of children with handicapping conditions into regular classroom environments requires that general educators develop competencies in providing differentiated, individualized instruction to all children, "normal" and otherwise. To meet this need, P.L. 94-142 mandates a comprehensive system of personnel development to provide appropriate pre- and in-service education for regular classroom teachers. It logically follows that the education, certification and licensing of these teachers will need to be changed to include 1) special education courses and/or experiences which (a) provide some basic understanding of handicapped children, (b) develop skills in diagnostic and evaluative assessment, and (c) deal with appropriate curricular design, effective teaching strategies and instructional media for those with handicapping conditions (Lynch, 1977). The purpose of this study was to assess the extent to which the current status of special education requirements (courses and/or experiences) for the initial certification and recertification of regular classroom teachers throughout the country have been changed to meet these new requirements.

METHODOLOGY

Sampling

State offices of teacher certification in the 50 states and the District of Columbia were contacted through use of a mail questionnaire during the month of April 1978.

Of the 51 political units contacted, 48 usuable questionnaires were returned, yielding a response rate of 94%. This relatively high response rate can be partially attributed to the rigorous follow-up procedures used, which involved follow-up letters and telephone calls to state education agencies (SEA's) to clarify responses.

Instrumentation

A ten item questionnaire was developed to determine the status of state required special education coursework experiences for teacher certification and/or recertification. This instrument was designed to address the survey objective and to yield pilot data regarding the critical issue of special education requirements for the certification and recertification of regular classroom teachers. A mixed format including open and closed-ended questions asked whether or not general classroom teachers were required to take special education courses and/or experiences to qualify for initial regular teacher certification and/or recertification, or whether such a policy was pending.

RESULTS

Certification Requirements

Special education courses for the initial certification of regular pre-service teachers are currently required in 10 states, 21% of the political units sampled. Four states (9%) revealed that

policies requiring special education courses for regular preservice teachers were pending. The remaining 33 states and the District of Columbia indicated that special education courses were neither presently required for teacher certification of regular preservice teachers nor pending. Identification of the status of the states regarding certification requirements is summarized in Table 1.

States which indicated that coursework in special education was required for prospective regular classroom teachers also described the nature and extent of the requirements. Two states, Georgia and Louisiana, indicated that "Introduction to Special Education" was required; Missouri and Nebraska require "Psychology of Exceptional Children"; Colorado requires a course entitled "Working with the Exceptional Child in the Regular Classroom"; and West Virginia, Kentucky, and Texas, have specific special education program objectives which must be incorporated into all approved teacher education programs. A summary of program objectives required in the latter three states indicates that these objectives are related to (a) assessment/evaluation, (b) classroom management functions, (c) knowledge of characteristics and learning differences of handicapped pupils, (d) knowledge of the concept of least restrictive environments and its implications for the instructional process, and (e) knowledge of the admission, review and dismissal processes and understanding the individualized educational programs (IEP) for handicapped pupils.

Only one state, Virginia, requires that prospective regular classroom teachers obtain "experiences and/or coursework with exceptional children to qualify for initial teacher certification." Specifically, Virginia requires that prospective regular classroom

TABLE 1

STATUS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS CERTIFICATION AND RECERTIFICATION

REQUIREMENTS FOR REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS

STATES	REQUIRES COURSES OR EXPERIENCES	DOES NOT REQUIRE COURSES OR EXPERIENCES	POLICY PENDING	STATES PROVIDING NO INFORMATION
Alabama		+		
Alaska		+		
Arizona		+		
Arkansas		+		
California		+		
Colorado	-			
Connecticut		+		
Delaware		+		
Florida		+		
Georgia	-			
Hawaii		+		
Idaho		+		
Illinois		+		
Indiana		+		
Iowa		+		
Kansas		+		
Kentucky	-			
Louisiana	-			
Maine		+		
Maryland		+		
Massachusetts			0	
Michigan		+		
Minnesota		+		
Mississippi		+		
Missouri	-			
Montana		+		
Nebraska	-			
Nevada		+		
New Hampshire		+		
New Jersey		+		
New Mexico		+		
New York				*
North Carolina				*
North Dakota		+		
Ohio		+		
Oklahoma	-			
Oregon		+		
Pennsylvania		+		
Rhode Island		+		
South Carolina		+		
South Dakota		+		
Tennessee			0	
Texas	-			
Utah		+		
Vermont		+		
Virginia	-			

STATES	REQUIRES COURSES OR EXPERIENCES	DOES NOT REQUIRE COURSES OR EXPERIENCES	POLICY PENDING	STATES PROVIDING NO INFORMATION
Washington				*
West Virginia	-			
Wisconsin			0	
Wyoming			0	
District of Columbia		+		

KEY

- Requires Courses or Experiences

+ Does Not Require Courses or Experiences

0 Policy Pending

* States Providing No Information

teachers have "experiences with exceptional children and knowledge in the detection of exceptional children." Virginia also requires information about referral procedures including the role of the regular classroom teachers in the development, implementation, and evaluation of individualized education program for exceptional children. Although the content of these experiences is very specific, the mode and processes through which the content is presented is left to the training institution.

Recertification Requirements

Regular classroom teachers are required to take coursework in special education for recertification purposes in Georgia and Missouri; Kansas and Wyoming have policies pending. The majority of the states (44 states, or 92%) do not require special education coursework for the recertification of regular classroom teachers. None of the responding states require that regular classroom teachers have experiences with exceptional children to become recertified.

Factors Effecting Change

The 10 State Departments requiring special education coursework for pre-service or regular teachers were asked to rank order their reasons for requiring these changes. States were requested to rank the following reasons for changes in order of importance:

- P. L. 94-142 (Education for All Handicapped Children's Act of 1975)
- Pressure or influence from professional organizations
- Pressure or influence from parent groups
- Pressure or influence from special education advocacy group
- Genuinely felt need on part of state department
- Other _____

Fully, 44% of the respondents indicated the most important ranking to the category of "genuinely felt need on part of the state department." It is interesting to note that P. L. 94-142 and pressure or influence from parent groups were not ranked as strong reasons for requiring certification changes for regular classroom teachers. Apparently, P. L. 94-142 has not yet stimulated State Departments of Education to develop teacher certification policies which insure that practicing regular educators acquire competencies, skills, and/or experiences to deal with handicapped children.

DISCUSSION

To realize the promise embedded in the Education for All Handicapped Children's Act of 1975 (P. L. 94-142), it is apparent that learners with handicapping conditions will increasingly be integrated into regular classroom programs, and that regular classroom teachers will need to be retrained for their work with these special populations. The question raised by this study is whether state departments of education are requiring these changes as a part of their teacher certification requirements for prospective and practicing teachers. On the basis of the findings of this study several conclusions may be drawn:

- A majority of the state departments of education (approximately 70%) do not presently require regular classroom teachers to complete courses in special education to qualify for initial certification.
- A large majority of states (approximately 92%) do not require special education coursework for the recertification of regular classroom teachers. In those states which do require coursework, general introduction to special education is the most commonly required course.
- Only the state of Virginia requires prospective teachers to obtain experience with exceptional children to qualify for initial teacher certification.

- Of those states which required coursework and/or experiences in special education for certification or recertification requirements, only two state departments of education indicated that these requirements resulted from P. L. 94-142. A majority indicated that changes resulted from a "genuinely felt need on the part of the state department."

There appear to be viable alternatives to the mere requirement of special education courses and/or experiences for regular education certification or recertification. West Virginia, Kentucky, and Texas' requirements of specific special education program objectives which must be incorporated into all approved teacher education programs warrant close attention. This requirement allows colleges and universities some flexibility, independence, and discretion as to how they will modify their curricula to provide training in special education for all educators. In the implementation of such an approach Turnbull and Turnbull (1978) suggest that all courses in the regular or general education curriculum that could have relevance to the education of handicapped students be broadened to include the appropriate special education information. For example, modules on the historical and philosophical aspects of P. L. 94-142 would be integrated into the existing "History and Foundations of Education Course"; and a module on the use of specialized curricular materials for handicapped learners could be integrated into an existing "Materials of Instruction" course, and so forth. This integrated approach, notwithstanding unforeseen disadvantages, has merit and should be explored by state departments of education.

SUGGESTED FUTURE RESEARCH

This study focused on a very narrow range of questions on state certification and recertification requirements for regular classroom teachers, regarding their preparation in special education. The findings show few states now have such requirements, but not why. Additional research is needed which (1) identifies reasons why a majority of states have not developed special education certification and recertification requirements for regular classroom teachers, (2) describes the nature and extent of modes of delivering special education courses and/or experiences developed by colleges and universities for regular classroom teachers, (3) describes the status of special education certification and recertification requirements for regular support personnel, such as guidance counselors, vocational counselors, principals, and so forth, (4) describes the legal implications and ramifications of compliance and the lack of compliance with both the letter and spirit of the P. L. 94-142 mandate, and (5) describes innovative and creative ways of preparing regular educators to effectively work with handicapped learners.

REFERENCES

Lynch, William W., "Training Educational Personnel Under the New Law: Prospects and Prospects," in Melvyn I. Semmel (Ed.), The Education for All Handicapped Children's Act (P. L. 94-142): Issues and Implications, Bloomington, Indiana, Indiana University, March 1977, pp. 59-65.

Turnbull, Rutherford H. and Turnbull, Ann, Free Appropriate Public Education Law and Implementation, Denver, Colorado: Love Publishing Company, 1978.

James M. Patton, Ed.D., is Chairperson, Department of Special Education, Virginia State College, Petersburg, Virginia.

Ronald L. Braithwaite, Ph.D., is Director of Research and Evaluation Consultation, Hampton Institute, Hampton, Virginia.